

Examples of State Humanities Council Programs for Seniors

Federal/State Partnership, NEH

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The NEH Federal/State Partnership is a model of American federalism in action. This collaborative effort dedicated to the study and enjoyment of the humanities links a national federal agency with fifty-six state and jurisdictional humanities councils. Federal/State Partnership helps the Endowment realize its two primary strategic goals: (1) to advance knowledge and understanding of the humanities, and (2) to increase public awareness of, access to, and support for the humanities in the United States. The Partnership makes humanities education and lifelong learning readily available at the local level, tailored to local interests and needs and drawing upon local resources, traditions and heritage.

With funds provided through the NEH Federal/Partnership, the councils provide support for: reading and discussion programs for children, families, and the newly literate that take place in libraries and other civic places; state and local book festivals, as well as the participation of a number of councils in the annual National Book Festival sponsored by the Library of Congress's Center for the Book; educational institutes and seminars for elementary and secondary school teachers; scholarship on state and local history and culture, such as comprehensive online state encyclopedias; exhibitions at museums, libraries, and historical sites; and radio, television, and film projects on humanities themes. They carry out an increasing amount of programming and communications electronically, using websites, electronic newsletters, social networking, podcasting, and RSS feeds. A number of councils post videos on YouTube.

The councils support thousands of humanities projects and programs every year that reach over three hundred million Americans in rural areas, urban neighborhoods, and suburban communities. They generate new audiences for the humanities while enriching the lives of those who already know the humanities well. Older Americans are natural audiences for programs of state humanities councils. Examples of recent activities and programs that are designed for or are about older Americans include the following:

"The Cape Fear River: Road to Bladen County"

Funded by the North Carolina Humanities Council initiative, the town of Elizabeth chose the Cape Fear River as a major road in Bladen County. Its collection of stories and recollections about the river include those of eighty-eight-year-old Horace Butler, who still works in timber, was the last logger to take a log raft down the river in 1957. He is the repository of a life intimately linked to the river. His story is now posted on the Bladen County Library's website.

Nebraska Humanities Council 2009 Sower Award

The Sower Award was given to philanthropist Richard Holland. A child of the Depression, Holland has been generous with his home city and state. His advocacy for the nation's first public-private endowment fund to benefit both the humanities council and arts

council, has resulted in an additional \$1.5 million appropriation to the state fund and \$1.5 million contributed to the private side of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment during the past two years, increasing the original \$5 million state endowment created by the Legislature in 1998 to \$6.5 million in support of the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Humanities Council.

Alaska Statehood Exhibit

The Alaska Statehood Exhibit at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage is a permanent exhibition that includes touchscreen videos of Alaska native elders talking about their experience of statehood in 1959 and the effects of the Statehood Act on Native life.

Arizona Humanities Council: Humanities Matters!

Among the discussion programming offered in senior centers around the state is a presentation on the American presidency.

Talking Hawai'i's Stories

The Hawai'i Council for the Humanities published *Talking Hawai'i's Stories*, a collection of oral histories of 17 men and 13 women who share their personal experience and observations of immigration, labor strikes, the Great Depression, World War II, statehood, the growth of tourism, the demise of sugar and pineapple industries, and the development of a multiethnic, culturally diverse island society. These stories were collected over thirty years by Warren Nishimoto, Michi Kodama-Nishimoto, and Cynthia Oshiro.

Oregon Humanities' "Think and Drink" with author Ursula K. Le Guin

One of the most popular of Oregon Humanities' very popular "Think and Drink" program, a happy-hour series that sparks provocative conversations about big ideas, was that which featured writer Ursula K. Le Guin (born 1929).

Maine is demographically the oldest state in the country

The library, reading and discussion programs, *Winter Weekends*, *Community Seminars* supported and conducted by the Maine Humanities Council attract audiences of primarily retired people, who are generally in their sixties.

Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program

This program pairs masters of folklife traditions with an apprentice seeking to document, promote, and preserve folklife traditions ranging from fiddling to storytelling to wood carving. The master artists are frequently senior citizens who are engaged in crafts they learned from their elders.

Wyoming Humanities Council's Humanities Forum

The Humanities Forum features programs by outstanding presenters who travel throughout Wyoming to speak at meetings and special events. Each presenter engages the audience in an active discussion of his or her topic. Among the current topics is the

story of an 84-year-old village woman from the Himalayas with no exposure to a Western civilization who made a pilgrimage to the United States.

Illinois Humanities Council grantmaking

Among recent grants made by the Illinois Humanities Council are those to the Skokie Theatre Music Foundation for a four-part lecture-concert series on American folk music targeted to senior citizens and to the Freeport Arts Center for a series of programs entitled "Honoring Local Veterans: A Humanities Approach."